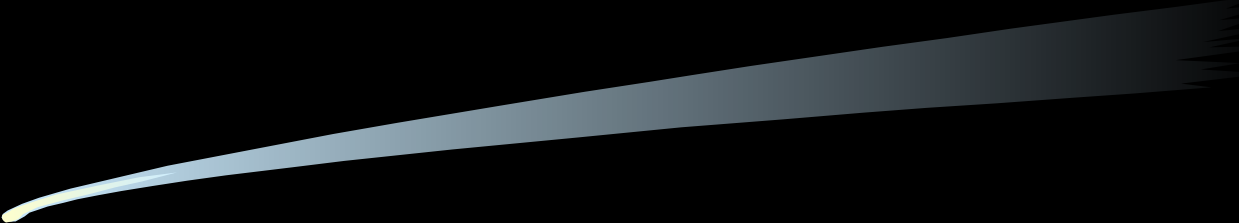




# **DEPLOYMENT AND THE MILITARY FAMILY**

**Colonel Alice Tarpley  
Chief Consultant to the Surgeon General  
for Clinical Social Work**



*“It is my strong personal view that  
Department of Defense service  
members and their families are the  
most valuable resource contributing  
the defense of our nation. Our total  
force truly does include families.”*

(Former) Secretary

of Defense

Dick

Cheney



# HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

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- During the Revolutionary War, there were no provisions for families
- “In-kind” benefits for camp followers
- 1794: cash benefits for widows/orphans of officers KIA
- 1802: cash benefits for widows/orphans of NCOs KIA
- 1847-1942: law prohibited married men from enlisting during peacetime

# HISTORICAL OVERVIEW(cont'd)

- Mid-1800s
  - Army regs formally acknowledged obligation to families
  - eligibility for benefits restricted to male officers and NCOs
- 1940: government family housing provided to E4s and above
- Post WWII: no longer practical to discourage enlistment of married personnel
  - rules discouraged female service members with families

# HISTORICAL OVERVIEW<sub>(cont'd)</sub>

- 1950s: first studies initiated regarding impact of Army families on career decisions
- 1960: family members outnumbered military personnel for first time
- 1965: Army Community Services organized

# HISTORICAL OVERVIEW<sub>(cont'd)</sub>

- 1979: Families In Blue study
- 1980: Family Matters office established
- 1980: DoD Instruction regarding Family Support (FS) programs & policies
- 1980s-90s: roles of FS Centers (FSCs) expanded
- 1990s: FSCs assumed extensive role with families during deployments & disaster situations



# PHASES OF DEPLOYMENT





# DEPLOYMENT TIMELINE

REINTEGRATION

REUNION

HOSTILITIES

SUSTAINMENT

DEPLOYMENT

PREDEPLOYMENT

# DATA ON ODS DEPLOYMENT

	<b>Total</b>	<b>ADAF</b>	<b>USAFR</b>
<b>Total Activated/Deployed</b>	704,692		
<b>Percent Married</b>			
<b>Officer</b>	75%		
<b>Enlisted</b>	60%		
<b>Women Deployed</b>	33,300	3,800	
<b>Single Parent Deployed</b>	22,895	686	409
<b>#- Children Affected</b>	32,048	894	1,606
<b>Dual Military Couples</b>			
<i>(both deployed)</i>	5,706	292	64
<b>#- Children Affected</b>	4,656	115	61



PREDEPLOYMENT

# DATA ON AF MEMBERS WHO REQUESTED EXCEPTIONS

NUMBER OF REQUESTS	REASON	DISPOSITION
11	Dependent Care	8 Discharged 3 Deferred
25	Pregnancy	25 Deferred
1	EFMP	1 Deferred
1	Family Problems	1 Deferred
3	Family Care Plans	3 Deferred
1	Humanitarian	1 Deferred

*Reserves - no reported requests for exception*

# TYPICAL REACTIONS TO NEWS OF DEPLOYMENT

- Shock
- Denial
- Anxiety
- Sadness
- Excitement
- Anger/resentment

# IDEAS TO HELP AMELIORATE STRESSORS (Pre-Deployment)

- Recognize that mixed emotional reaction is normal
- Talk about ways to keep in touch
- Identify ways to help the children cope
- Discuss plans for the remaining spouse
- Plan fun events before the



# DEPLOYMENT



# DEPLOYMENT DAY

- ROBOTIC
- OVERWHELMED
- RELIEVED
- CONFUSED
- INTENSE SENSE OF LONELINESS
- GUILTY





SUSTAINMENT

# PROBLEMS SEEN IN SPOUSES OF DEPLOYED

- 40% felt sad, lonely and had trouble sleeping four or more days per week
- 25%+ experienced these symptoms daily
- 25% had trouble concentrating, felt everything was an effort or couldn't "shake the blues"

# COMMON REACTIONS TO DEPLOYMENT

- First 6 weeks
  - Abandonment
  - Loss
  - Emptiness
  - Pain
  - Disorganization

# COMMON REACTIONS TO DEPLOYMENT (cont'd)

- Sustainment
  - Hope
  - Confidence
  - Calmness
  - Less anger
  - Loneliness

# COMMON REACTIONS TO DEPLOYMENT (cont'd)

- Last 6-8 weeks
  - Apprehension
  - Excitement
  - High expectations
  - Worry
  - Fear

# TIPS SPOUSES CAN TAKE TO REDUCE DEPLOYMENT STRESSORS

- Develop individual and family goals  
(use them to develop/maintain family routines)
- Accept the lack of control over deployment events
- Concentrate on what can be controlled  
(today, self, family, job, etc)
- Become or remain active  
(get a job, volunteer, take up a hobby)

# TIPS SPOUSES CAN TAKE TO REDUCE DEPLOYMENT STRESSORS (cont'd)

- Seek relevant information about the mission, service and helping agencies
- Seek social support (from friends, relatives, support groups, families of other deployed members)
- Communicate with spouse, open channels of communication with own family
- Check out rumors and don't believe everything you hear



HOSTILITIES



# COMMON REACTIONS TO HOSTILITIES

- Fear that the member will be injured, captured or killed
- Fear of terrorist attacks
- Fear that the experience will have a longstanding negative effect
- Constant anxiety - especially when news reports are immediate and frequent
- Spouses often become “news junkies” at expense of families/other activities

# DEALING WITH HOSTILITIES

- Recognize that fear is normal
- Continue use of coping strategies for deployment
- Confine viewing of TV news to defined periods



REUNION

# REUNION STRESSORS AMONG FAMILIES DURING 6 MONTHS POST ODS

*Army Study (1992)\**

- Readaption to marital and family relationships
- Lack of time for family reintegration
- Couple jealousy and suspicions
- Ongoing military stressors
- Uncertainty about future retention

\* TEITELBAUM, WALTER REED ARMY

# REUNION STRESSORS AMONG FAMILIES POST ODS

*Air Force Study, 1992\**

- Inequities in homecoming celebrations
- Inequities in time off
- Readjustment to marital relationship
- Relationships with children



# REUNION TIPS

- Before the reunion, talk about what you'd like to do during your initial few days after the homecoming
- Recognize that fantasies about homecoming are seldom realities
- Don't be surprised if it takes a little while to re-develop your previous sense of intimacy - sex may be tense for awhile



# REUNION TIPS (cont'd)

- Keep expressing appreciation for the other
- Focus time on each other - allow time for each parent to have individual time with children
- Don't be surprised by physical changes (loss of appetite, trouble sleeping, bowel trouble, etc) which may be a result of a heightened physical state
- Avoid tight schedules
- Expect interruptions from family and friends



# REINTEGRATION



# REINTEGRATION WITH FAMILY (TIPS FOR BOTH SPOUSES)

- Recognize that stress with reintegration is common
- Listen to the others' stories
- Recognize that your experiences have changed you more than you realized
- You may feel a sense of loss of independence
- Recognize a shift in roles/responsibilities - negotiate a new balance
- Make sure the other has some space

# REINTEGRATION WITH FAMILY (TIPS FOR BOTH SPOUSES)

- Don't play "one-up" <sup>(cont'd)</sup> games - both sides had unique stressors
- Build common interests again
- Pace yourselves - mixed emotions are exhausting
- Don't drill the other if there are concerns regarding an affair
- Both spouses may feel unneeded, unwanted - discuss changes and gradually develop solutions

# REINTEGRATION WITH FAMILY (TIPS FOR BOTH SPOUSES)

(cont'd)

- Realize that problems that were there before may still be there
- Expect children to test limits
- Practice flexibility and patience
- Communicate respect
- Plan for future in military together



# SERVICES FOR MILITARY AND FAMILY MEMBERS

# **FAMILY SUPPORT FOR DEPLOYMENTS: THREE INTERLOCKING SYSTEMS**

1. Installation/Community services
2. Unit services
3. What families do for themselves and others



# GOAL OF THESE SYSTEMS

1. Prevent problems
2. Quickly solve problems which do arise
3. Help families improve their ability to function in future deployments



# FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS

- Information & Referral
- Relocation Assistance
- Employment Assistance
- Volunteer Assistance
- Financial Assistance
- Family Life Skills
- Transition Assistance
- Individual and Family Readiness

# FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS

(cont'd)

*SPECIFIC PROGRAMS OFFERED BY FSCs  
IN SUPPORT OF INDIVIDUAL AND  
FAMILY READINESS INCLUDE:*

- Classes to address preparing for deployments, coping with deployments, and reunion
- Sponsorship of waiting spouses groups
- Assistance with morale calls



# FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS

(cont'd)

- Collection and follow-up on requests made in mobility processing line (e.g. calls to spouses, helping spouses arrange transportation)
- Coordination of installation efforts to support members and families
- Assistance in resolving crisis situations

# CHILD CARE AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

- Child development services program includes 690 child development services at 424 locations
  - Capacity for over 69,000 spaces for children age 6-12 weeks through 12 years
- Over 11,000 family day care homes at installations throughout DoD

# CHILD CARE AND YOUTH PROGRAMS (cont'd)

- Most youth programs provide
  - Before and after-school child care programs
  - Summer day camps for children of working parents
  - Wide variety of social and recreational programs
- AF offers Give Parents a Break Program

# MILITARY FAMILY INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE

- Formerly called Military Family Resource Center
- Information clearinghouse for the Office of Family Policy, Support and Services
- Maintains data, material, and periodicals on military family issues
- Provides information to both

# CIVILIAN COMMUNITY AGENCIES

- Have been invaluable in helping installations during large scale deployments
- Include organizations such as:
  - American Red Cross
  - United Way of America
  - Salvation Army
  - Armed Services YMCA
  - American Legion
  - USO

# CIVILIAN COMMUNITY AGENCIES (cont'd)

- Types of services offered:
  - Stress management sessions
  - Home and car repairs
  - Transportation
  - Financial assistance
  - Crisis Intervention

# DoD Educational Activities (DODEA-formally DODDS)

- Develop/disseminate materials to educate teachers to help students cope
- Emphasize atmosphere of normalcy
- Encourage students to write parents and “adopted service members”
- Offer support groups for



# UNIT SUPPORT



# UNIT SUPPORT

- Varies by type of unit and base
- Varies by number of service members deployed from the unit
- High mobility units most likely to provide support through
  - briefings
  - telephone chains
  - family support groups and activities
- Less mobile units provide more sporadic support and are less likely to have family support groups



# WHAT INDIVIDUALS DO FOR THEMSELVES/OTHERS

# INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT/ HELP FOR OTHERS

- Spouses' support groups
- Waiting spouses programs
- Follow through on tips for coping



# CLOSING

- All military families are impacted by deployments
- Impact can range from positive to negative, long-term to short-term
- Mental health professionals need to appreciate the degree to which family members can be impacted and know the resources available to help